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ABSTRACT

Implicit or explicit national governmental actions designed to perpetuate, change conditions, maintain the status quo, or introduce change (although not designed for that purpose) are known as policy. Some of these actions relate directly to population distribution from early land grants to present urban renewal and rural development activities. Others relating to agriculture, growth, and relocation of industries and government facilities, expansion of higher education opportunities, service in the armed forces, housing, and the widespread construction of transportation systems have had unanticipated impacts on population relocation. Shifts in demands for services have also resulted in population redistribution. When these occur, the government must consider their impact in formulating policies; existing policies must be evaluated and their implementation mechanisms reassessed or new programs devised. Factors which should be considered are: (1) the numbers involved, (2) the locations affected, (3) the migrant's importance in his parent and host populations, and (4) characteristics of people which predispose them to require specialized services. In recent decades, the heavy movement of blacks out of the rural South has produced shifts in service needs. This outmigration effected compositional changes in both rural and urban populations, affecting the urban South, the urban non-South, and the rural South. The paper also examines some policy implications related to service needs caused by this movement. (NQ)

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POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE MOVEMENT OF BLACKS OUT OF THE RURAL SOUTH *

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Introduction

In a broad context, policy generally refers to implicit or explicit national governmental actions, specifically designed to perpetuate or change conditions or that in fact do maintain the status quo or introduce change although not designed for that purpose. Many governmental actions have been directly related to the distribution of our population from early land settlement grants to present day urban renewal and rural development activities. Other governmental actions relating to agriculture, growth and relocation of industries and government facilities, expansion of opportunities for higher education, service in the armed forces, housing, and the widespread construction of a network of transportation systems have had unanticipated impacts on population relocation.

Population redistribution brings with it shifts in demands for services. When such changes occur, their impact must be considered by the government in formulating policies; evaluation must be made of existing policies, and their implementation mechanisms reassessed. New programs may need to be devised. Factors which should be taken into account in this deliberative process relate to (1) the numbers involved, (2) the locations affected, (3) the importance of migrants in their parent and host populations, and (4) characteristics of people that predispose them to require specialized services.

One development of recent decades which produced shifts in service needs was the heavy movement of blacks out of the rural South. This outmigration effected compositional changes both in the population remaining in rural areas and in the urban populations which the migrants joined. Some of the policy implications of this movement as they relate to service needs are examined in this paper.

Service Needs

Over the years Americans have come to assume that their inherent right to the "pursuit of happiness" presupposes a high level of governmentally supplied services. Since the Depression of the 1930's, expectations about the quantity and quality of services government should supply have increased and many former niceties are now regarded as necessities. Superimposed on these increasing expectations have been demands that every segment of the population have equal access to services. And policy makers are also confronted with determining which level of government bears the responsibility for meeting specific demands.

In large measure, the service needs of a population, regardless of location, are determined by its demographic structure. Some service needs are a function of numbers--fire protection and water supply come to mind. But others are generated by the peculiarities

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of the population. One composed primarily of young adults and their children will make heavy demands on maternity and child health services and will require large investments in primary and secondary education. By contrast, a retirement community will have little use for these services but will require greater allocations for age-related medical treatment and geriatric facilities.

While age and sex are fundamental, socio-economic variables are equally as important in determining service needs. The demands of persons who ended their education by the eighth grade will differ from those of the college educated not only because education is closely associated with income potential but also because additional years of academic life tend to increase expectations. A highly educated population expects higher quality education for its children, accessibility to all kinds of goods and services, and cultural and recreational amenities. Economic factors such as labor force participation and occupational and industrial attachments also affect the generation of service needs. Generalized measures of income compensation may be required, for instance, in areas where a large proportion of the people are unemployed or not employable. Revamping of educational curricula and the design of vocational retraining programs are often accompaniments to shifting occupational structures. And some industries have highly specialized needs for both natural and human resources, which may require government support.

Black Migration from the Rural South

The exact magnitude of the total movement of blacks out of the rural South cannot be ascertained. According to the 1967 Survey of Economic Opportunity, one of the few bodies of national data in which rural origin of people can be identified, about two million adult blacks of rural Southern origin were living in urban areas in 1967. A little less than half were in the South and the rest had left that region for other parts of the country. Three populations -- the urban non-South, the urban South, and the rural South itself -- were affected by this movement. The impact on their service needs can be considered separately.

The Urban Non-South

By far the greatest publicity (and approbrium) has been given to the blacks who left the rural South for the non-South, where they contributed in different degrees to the growth of black populations in various parts of that broad region. In 1967 they comprised about a fifth of the urban blacks 17 years old and over in each of the three regions of the North and West. In no non-South region, however,

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were rural-urban migrants from the South as numerous as Southern urban-origin migrant blacks. To keep their numbers in further perspective, it should be noted that even though rural-urban migrants constituted an important part of the black population, in no region did they comprise more than two percent of the total adult urban population. Nevertheless, the arrival over time of some 2.5 million black migrants from the South, 1 million of whom were of rural origin, and their offspring, has augmented service needs in the non-South merely by increasing the populations there and by acerbating pressures that already existed.

Certain characteristics of adult rural-urban migrants in the non-South should predispose them to make heavy demands on ameliorative or compensatory services. About half of them had completed eight years or less of school, close to a third had either reached the normal retirement age of 65 years or had some work-limiting health condition, and those who were employed were not likely to have held white collar jobs. In these respects, this group of rural Southern blacks were more handicapped than the urban black population they joined although they compared favorably to those still in rural areas. However, they were no more likely to be classed as living under income poverty conditions in 1967 (using Federally defined standards) than non-Southern urban blacks. But the high incidence of poverty among black adults (21 percent) as compared with whites (8 percent) in the non-South is another indicator of their high potential need for specialized services. (These measures of comparison, and those used elsewhere in the paper, reflect differences apparent in 1967 and conditions in urban and rural residences at that time. The situation at some prior time, especially at time of migration, cannot be determined from data in the SEO).

The Urban South

The situation in the South was somewhat different. The urban South sustained heavy outmigration of its black population to the non-South (1.5 million by 1967 SEO estimates of lifetime migration for adults). Migration from the rural South (.9 million) served to offset some of the losses. By 1967 almost a quarter of the urban Southern blacks were of rural Southern origin, and they comprised about 4 percent of the adult urban population.

Rural-urban migrants who remained within the South were more like the population still in rural areas than those who left the South. They were at some disadvantage when compared to native urban blacks, particularly with respect to education. Three-fifths had completed eight years or less of school. Well over a quarter of the adults were limited in their working capacity by age or health, and those who did report employment were more likely to be laborers (in the case of males) or private household workers (among females).

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As in the non-South, rural urban migrants were no more likely to be in poverty (35 percent) than black urban nonmigrants (38 percent).

The Rural South

As is certainly well known by members of this Association, the rural South has been tremendously affected by outmigration. About half the adult blacks who were living in the rural South at age 16 or earlier were somewhere else in the country in 1967. And the population in the rural South differed in many respects from that of rural Southerners who were no longer there. As a group, rural-urban migrants were better educated, more likely to have had some employment in 1966 and to have had a white collar occupation, less likely to have a work-limiting health condition, and far less likely to be living under poverty conditions (27 percent) than people who lived in the rural South (59 percent). This was despite the fact that proportionately more of the rural-urban migrants were 50 years old or older.

The rural black population in 1967 had had little exposure to the rest of the country; three-fourths of the adults had never lived as much as 50 miles from their 1967 residence. Two-thirds had ended their education by the eighth grade or sooner. Roughly a third had some kind of work-limiting condition or had passed their 65th birthday, over a quarter of all adults (and nearly a fifth of the males) reported no employment at all during 1966. Half of all black males who were employed were farm or nonfarm laborers and two-thirds of the employed females were farm laborers or private household workers.

By 1967, relatively few blacks had moved into the rural South and those who had were primarily from the urban South. Outnumbering persons new to the rural South were return migrants -- nearly one out of eight rural Southern blacks were returnees from an urban place. There was little to distinguish persons moving to the rural South from other rural Southern blacks. Their educational attainment was limited, on the average, and the working capacities of many were hampered by ill health or age. They were almost as likely to be in poverty as rural nonmigrants.

The 1970 Census of Population provides still more insight into the demographic characteristics of rural blacks. Despite the heavy outmigration of potential parents, high fertility among those in the rural South, and the presence of many children not living with their parents, results in a large population in the younger ages. The combined effects of fertility and migration yields a population with high dependency; that is, there is a high ratio of young and old persons to those in the productive ages. Of all rural blacks, 46 percent were under 13 years and another nine percent were 65 years and

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over in 1970. Females exceeded males among those aged 18 to 64 (the sex ratio was 92), and a very high proportion of them were occupied in taking care of close to a million children (one-fourth of the population) who were under ten years of age. Out of a rural population of 3.9 million blacks, little more than 800,000 were males between the ages of 18 and 65 and, based on the SEO data, a fifth of them could be expected to have some work-limiting health condition.

Policy Implications As Related to Service Needs

In the urban South and non-South as a whole, the numerical impact of rural-urban migrant blacks was relatively small in relation to the urban population of all races. But it is well known that blacks are highly concentrated in certain parts of cities and persons of rural origin have contributed to this concentration. Over half a million rural-urban migrant blacks were in the central cities of four large metropolitan areas in 1967 and three-quarters of a million were in seven.

Blacks of rural Southern origin living in urban places in 1967 compared favorably to the black population which originated in urban areas. As previous reports[17] from the cooperative research of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Georgia have indicated, the success of rural-urban migrants in obtaining employment and their level of income equalled or exceeded that of other urban blacks, despite somewhat more limited education. In terms of broad occupational categories, their relative contribution to the urban occupational structure was proportionate to their share in the total urban employed population. There was little to indicate that they contributed unduly to the lowest status occupations, whether they had migrated within the South or out of it. Nor were they more likely than other urban blacks to be living in income poverty or to be the recipients of public welfare assistance.

The characteristics of the rural-urban migrants which predispose them to require specialized and perhaps remedial services were similar to those of urban-origin blacks. Their needs for services should be considered in the light of requirements of the total urban black population and urban populations in general. Not only should individual wants be considered, but also problems stemming from such things as extreme densities, the social and psychological effects of overcrowding, inadequate housing, pollution, and the dislocations accompanying changing land use patterns in urban development and redevelopment.

Many of the same service needs are present in the rural South,

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but they are intensified by the population structure and its dispersion. The Southern rural black population has been greatly reduced through migration but this migration may well have carried off some of its most capable persons, judging from the success of rural-origin migrants in urban settings. Certainly, the population left in the rural South after migration and those moving into the area or returning to it had multiple service needs and were limited with respect to the ways in which these needs could be met. The age and sex structure alone means that service needs are monumental in relative terms. The large concentration of children, many of whom do not live with both parents, requires heavy outlays for education, and these outlays should compensate for the limited education of the older generation. Medical needs are also great, not only for maternity and child care benefits, but also for the large numbers over 65 years of age, and those with some type of health problem.

Since over half of the rural blacks are living in poverty, one of the highest priorities is to make provisions for adequate incomes. Of the several ways in which income levels might be raised in the immediate future, two which come most readily to mind are various types of transfer payments and increased employment opportunities. For many persons in the rural South, the short-term answer for increased income may have to be some type of transfer payments because the kinds of opportunities which could be developed through employment are limited. The low average level of education, meager evidence of high-level vocational skills, as demonstrated by occupational attachments, and the relatively low proportions of potential workers in prime working ages preclude the participation of many rural blacks in some forms of economic development. If income levels are to be raised through the increased employment of women, provisions will have to be made for adequate child care services.

The overall volume of outmigration must, of necessity, decline because of the shrunken base from which migrants can be drawn, as Calvin Beale has pointed out:

> "...The number of potential outmigrants continues high in the 1970's as large cohorts of young people come of age. But among blacks, reduced childbearing among women presently of childbearing age -- coupled with the age distorting effects of past migration -- has lowered the number of young children to an extent that foreshadows considerable reduction in the number of young adults of school-leaving age in the 1980's. Purely economic pressures on rural outmigration have been lowered by the greatly reduced dependence on farming and other industries of declining manpower needs..."[2/]

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As a result, the numbers of rural-origin blacks in the urban sector will eventually decline.

There is evidence, some of it impressionistic rather than the findings of research, that the situation for blacks in nonmetropolitan areas is improving, at least to the extent that some young people feel they now have a choice and need not of necessity move away to the large cities. Younger people are less dependent on agriculturally related activities. The proportion who had completed high school is dramatically higher among the young adults, especially females. The evidence from the SEO indicates, however, that migration increases with greater education, and, the higher the education, the less likely outmigrants are to return. If past trends continue, many of these better educated blacks will leave the rural South for good. If more of them can be induced to remain or return, the improvements in the qualifications of the population can make it possible for more sophisticated and technologically advanced economic development.

The 1967 data indicate only a small movement of urban blacks to the rural South, and few of them had any college training. If the economic and social situation for rural people changes, it may even be possible that well-qualified blacks from other places might find it desirable to take up residence in the rural South. That the rural South can be attractive to inmigrants is evidenced in the SEO by the behavior of whites. Some 2.7 million white adults moved into the rural South from other places -- 1 million from outside the South. Many of them were highly trained and skilled. A quarter had completed one or more years of college and almost a third of the males were in professional and managerial occupations.

Further improvement of the situation in the rural South could come from a reduction of some of the inequities in the rural-urban sharing of Federal program services. As was pointed out in a recently published Third Annual Report of the President to the Congress on Government Services to Rural America:

> "About half of the poor reside in rural areas, yet rural people receive significantly less than half of the Food Stamp bonus coupons, manpower training program services of both the Department of Labor and the HEW, ESEA funds, public welfare assistance, and OEO legal services. Also, the allocation of health program services of HEW, OEO, and the Veterans' Administration appears to be disproportionately low in rural areas in relation to the percent of population in rural areas..."[37]

Other governmentally-sponsored changes could be introduced to improve the coverage provided by Workmen's Compensation, other types

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of employment security, and health insurance programs.

In the past, policies, or a lack of them, were conducive to migration out of rural areas, with concommitant shifts in service needs. In the future the movement out will be slowed down and may even be reversed. The service needs of rural blacks in cities are already very much like those of other urban blacks. If the improvements cited here as possibilities for the rural South become realities and if further innovations for rural development are devised, the service needs of rural blacks can be reduced so that they more closely approximate those of other Americans.

SOURCES

Most of the materials in this paper come from published or unpublished materials from the cooperative study of the University of Georgia and the U. S. Department of Agriculture, The Poverty Dimensions of Rural-to-Urban Migration, based on the 1967 Survey of Economic Opportunity. Materials for 1970 are from the U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1970, SUBJECT REPORTS, Final Report PC(2)-1B, Negro Population. (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1973).

FOOTNOTES

1/ Gladys K. Bowles, A. Lloyd Bacon, and P. Neal Ritchey, Poverty Dimensions of Rural-to-Urban Migration: A Statistical Report, Population-Migration Reports, Rural-Urban Migrants, Volume I, Part 1 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1973); Anne S. Lee and Gladys K. Bowles, "Contributions of Rural Migrants to the Urban Occupational Structure", paper presented at the annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, College Park, Maryland, August, 1973 (forthcoming in Agricultural Economics Review); and Calvin L. Beale, "Rural Blacks in the City", speech at a meeting of the American Agricultural Association, Detroit, Michigan, December 29, 1970 (published in The Farm Index (July, 1971), pp. 9-10.)

2/ Calvin L. Beale, "Migration Patterns of Minorities in the United States," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Agricultural Economics Association, Edmonton, Alberta, August 10, 1973 (to be published in the proceedings).

3/ RURAL DEVELOPMENT: Third Annual Report of the President to the Congress on Government Services to Rural America (Pursuant to Title IX, Section 901(e) of the Agricultural Act of 1970).